

VZCZCXRO2630  
PP RUEHROV  
DE RUEHJM #1992 3091314  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 041314Z NOV 08  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3172  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001992

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/RAMCHAND/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2018  
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW EAST JERUSALEM EVICTION, HOME DEMOLITION  
EXPECTED

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions (ICAHN) confirmed press reports that the Jerusalem Municipality intends to evict two Palestinian families from their homes in Bayt Hanina and possibly demolish the building. ICAHN said they do not expect the Municipality to conduct demolitions before November 11 mayoral elections. The Jerusalem Municipality told PolOff they have no demolitions scheduled the week of November 2, but did not comment on the possible eviction. End Summary.

ICAHN: MUNICIPALITY TO DEMOLISH  
DISPUTED BAYT HANINA BUILDING  
-----

¶2. (C) UN OCHA representative James Weatherill confirmed to PolOff October 31 a story in the Palestinian press that Israeli authorities intend to evict two Palestinian families from a duplex in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Bayt Hanina and demolish the building. According to press reports, the property will come under the control of the Israel Lands Authority (ILA), which claims the land has been under ILA control since 1967, because it was Jordanian state-owned before then.

¶3. (C) Weatherill said that the Jerusalem Municipal Court ruled in November 2007 that the two families did not have the right to reside in the building. The families' lawyer managed to suspend the eviction, but the court ruled in late September that the families have until November 6 to vacate the property. Weatherill said ownership of the land is unclear. He said the two families living in the duplex -- the Musalamanis and the Jamjums -- pay rent to the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, which controls many formerly-Jordanian East Jerusalem properties. Weatherill said the Waqf has refused to defend its ownership of the land in Israeli courts.

ICAHN EXPECTS WAVE OF DEMOLITIONS  
AFTER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS  
-----

¶4. (C) Coordinator for the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions (ICAHN) Meir Margalit told PolOff October 31 that ICAHN worked to preserve the Musalamani and Jamjum families' residences in Israeli courts, but failed. He said the Municipality is unlikely to conduct demolitions before the November 11 mayoral elections, but will probably demolish at least 20 homes before the end of 2008, to exhaust its remaining demolition budget. He said several East Jerusalem homes are under threat of "imminent demolition," including a complex in the Abu Tor neighborhood that houses 30 Palestinian families.

¶5. (C) Naftali Levi, Assistant to the Jerusalem Municipality Head of the Department of Licensing and Planning, told PolOff

November 2 that the Municipality has no scheduled demolitions the week of November 2, but he did not comment on the possible eviction of the two families.

#### BACKGROUND ON THE BUILDING

16. (U) The Bayt Hanina home was built in 1954 on Jordanian state land, but was generally vacant for 30 years following the 1967 war. The Waqf renovated the building in 1995 and the Musalamanis and Jamjums began renting the building from the Waqf in 1997. It currently houses 22 family members. The building sits in East Jerusalem between the Palestinian neighborhood of Bayt Hanina, the Israeli neighborhood of Neve Ya'acov, and an Israeli military installation.

WALLES